Beyond Protest:
Proposal-Style Citizens' Movements in 1970s and 80s Japan

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1. Introduction

From the mid 1970s, the language and strategy of Japanese citizens' movements began to change. Rejecting what they viewed as the inadequate logic of protest in earlier social movements, citizen activists conceptualized, articulated, and implemented a new proposal-style (*teian-gata*) of activism. Rather than accuse the state and corporate Japan of exploitation or environmental destruction, activists encouraged citizens to channel their energies into the creation of self-sustaining alternatives working within the system, in the process, laying a foundation for less idealistic and more efficacious social activism. Instead of tackling power head-on, activists suggested that movements get behind the wall of domination and use the tools of the system to change the system—what one activist graphically conceptualized as "giving up on ideological masturbation" and "going to bed with capitalism."[1] To give focus to their novel approach, activists in the mid 1980s coined the term "proposal-style citizens' movement" (*teian-gata shimin undō*), contrasting this with earlier "accusation-style" (*kokuhatsu-gata*) movements.[2] Though ultimately replaced in the 1990s by the language of "civil society," "NGOs" and "NPOs," the idea of proposal-style activism was important because it succinctly articulated activists' single-minded attempt to transform the prevailing language and strategy of social movements. But more than this, the idea of proposal became a kind of blueprint for activism in later decades promising, as it did, success through the hazardous tactics of engagement and symbiosis.

The shift in language and strategy poses some intriguing questions for the historian of social movements, particularly in the context of Japanese history after the student upheavals of the late 1960s. What was the nature of social movement change? Why was change perceived as necessary? Who effected the change? And, to what extent did the change involve substantial divergence from over two decades of earlier citizen activism? Herein, I put forward some initial answers to these questions through investigation of an organic produce distribution movement at the center of the proposal generation, the Association to Preserve the Earth (*Daichi o Mamoru Kai*; hereafter Daichi). I show how activists' ideas and their articulation in written forms of communication, such as movement pamphlets and articles in the mainstream media, were central in conceptualizing the language and strategy of social movements

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[1] Interview with Takami Yūichi, 17 June 2002. Also see Takami Yūichi. *Deru kui ni naru: NGO de meshi wo kū* (Tokyo: Tsukiji Shokan, 1998), pp. 12–43.

[2] "Seikatsu Teian-gata Shimin Undō no Atarashii Nami." In *Asahi Journal* (1 August 1986), pp. 16–21. The term "proposal-style citizens' movement" can be directly attributed to Takami Yūichi of the Japan Recycling Citizens' Association (Takami interview, 17 June 2002).

in the wake of a decade of "accusation" and "protest." Socio-economic change, conservative political institutions, and earlier citizen activism all played a role in facilitating the new movements, but it was leaders' ideas that most directly stimulated the transition to proposal-style grassroots activism.[3] From a broader historical perspective, this paper reveals how the proposal generation forms a crucial link between the citizen and resident protests of the 1960s and 1970s and the NPO/NGO activism so conspicuous in recent years.[4] By nurturing activists and legitimizing a pragmatic approach to social activism, citizens' movements of the 70s and 80s became prototypes for Japan's non-profit organizations in the 1990s. Indeed, citizen activism, I argue, did not disappear after the residential movements of the 1970s, only to miraculously reappear two decades later in the form of professional civil society organizations. Instead, it charted a course that lead away from protest in the direction of less antagonistic and, arguably, more effective social movements.

The key to bringing about substantive change, activists argued, was a civil society comprised of effective—that is, results-producing—social movement organizations (SMOs), manifest, for example, in the "citizen enterprise" (*shimin jigyō*) model adopted by key movements. Herein, SMOs were conceived of as profitable (or at the very least, financially self-sustaining) independent entities pursuing realistic and realizable agendas such as recycling, peace, nuclear power, organic food distribution, and support for the disabled. The leading lights in the creation of model citizen enterprises were Daichi (organic food, 1974) and the Japan Recycling Movement Citizens' Association (recycling, 1977), while the Dandelion House Foundation (*Tanpopo no Ie;* support for the disabled, 1973), the Peace Boat initiative of Tsujimoto Kiyomi, the activism of self-described "citizen scientist" Takagi Jinzaburō, and other similar movements, extended the proposal model into other areas not so easily "commercialized." The following table provides a breakdown of issues for movements that proactively associated with the discourse and praxis of proposal-style activism.[5] Note how broad systemic issues relating to "democracy" or "rights" now took a backseat to specific material issues rooted in everyday life. Here the proposal generation followed a trend already emerging among the myriad of local residents movements from the late 1960s. But different to these, 1970s and 80s activists made intentional efforts to avoid the strategy of protest.

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[3] My approach to ideology and its influence on social movement mobilization and development has been greatly enriched by a growing body of sociological literature on framing processes. Specifically: David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." In *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 26 (2000), pp. 611–639; David A. Snow et al. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation." In *American Sociological Review*, vol.51, no.4 (August 1986), pp. 464–481; and Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison. *Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

[4] Other than studies on regional anti-pollution or anti-development movements, there is a dearth of Japanese language scholarship synthetically tracing the development of citizens' movements from the 1970s through to the emergence of the NPO sector after the enactment of the NPO Law in 1998. Some Japanese activists I interviewed speak of the 1970s and 1980s as the "citizen movement ice age" (*shimin undō fuyu no jidai*).

[5] The professionalization of Japan's social movement sector from the 1970s mirrors a similar process in the US theorized upon by Zald and others under the rubric of resource mobilization. Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy. *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1987).

A List of Issues for 1300 Citizens' Movements in 1986 [6]

Natural soap	300	Medical	58
Collective purchasing	289	Politics (local and national)	56
Environment and conservation	249	Information networks	55
Village and town revitalization	162	Recycling	49
Agriculture	153	Anti-smoking	48
Energy (including anti-nuclear activism)	132	Fruit and vegetable stores	39
School lunches	125	Welfare	37
Pollution	108	Women	37
Consumer issues	98	Assistance to developing nations	33
Safe milk	87	Freedom of information	15
Food	81	Okinawan issues	15
Education	63	Cultural / performance	9
Peace	59	Other	13

As important as the new array of issues, however, was the overtly pragmatic approach these movements adopted toward internal organization, and also toward conservative political, economic, and legal institutions. Within movements, activists argued that citizens need not cling to amateurism, and that professionalism was the one realistic path to the autonomy so idealized by earlier generations of activists. Similarly, this pragmatism carried over into activists' approach to the outside world. Reacting to and learning from what they perceived as the fatally-flawed praxis of protest, activists began to assert that change could only happen if movements adopted a realistic approach to institutional power. *Kyōsei*, or symbiosis, became the symbolic expression of this approach. If movements wanted to succeed, they would simply have to tap into—or, at the very least, learn to live with—the power concentrated in bureaucracies, political parties, and corporate Japan, regardless of ideological colors. In short, any ally was a good ally, and any resource potentially useful.

To an extent this pragmatism was nothing new. Citizen activists, from at least the 1950s, displayed a pragmatic impulse both ideologically and in the realm of nuts-and-bolts activism.[7] But in the hands of 1970s activists, this impulse took on specific connotations. It implied that citizens' movements would be far better off if they abandoned rigid idealism or fruitless protest and focused on changing the things they could. Devotion to principles was certainly admirable, but in the end what really mattered was the condition of the ordinary individual in everyday life. The system needed to be changed, no doubt. But change, activists argued, had to begin at home in the "small universes" of daily life—what the intellectual and activist Tsurumi Shunsuke some decades earlier had called a bugs-eye, as opposed to a birds-eye, approach to social activism.[8]

As it turned out, pragmatism was an important choice since it would have historical repercussions

[6] This data is drawn from a list of 1309 citizens' movements compiled in Banana Bōto Jikkō Iinkai, ed. *Inochi, shizen, kurashi: Banana bōto—Mōhitotsu no seikatsu o tsukuru nettowākāzu no funade* (Tokyo: Hon no Ki, 1986), pp. 162–226.

[7] Ui Jun, for example, suggests that pragmatism was a common feature among resident protest movements in the late 60s and early 70s. Ui Jun. *Kōgai genron: Gappon* (Tokyo: Aki Shobō, 1990), p. 10.

[8] Oda Makoto. *Nani o watashitachi wa hajimeteiru no ka* (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobō, 1970), p. 88.

well beyond the movements at the center of the proposal generation. On a practical level, such movements certainly opened a window to the professionalization of civil society and the legitimization of certain kinds of citizen activism, but in the realm of ideology and public discourse, the appeal and subsequent spread of pragmatic social activism served to narrow further a discursive field already wounded by the popular backlash against violent and ideological social movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s. To use Alberto Melucci's words, proposal movements "broadcast" a new "message" to society, which reconfigured the obligatory association of protest with social movements and the seemingly natural antagonism between capitalism and progressive causes.[9] The impact of these two developments—one strategic, the other ideological—on Japanese democracy and civil society is still playing itself out today.

2. The Background to Proposal-Style Citizens' Movements

Underlying the emergence of proposal-style movements were a cluster of environmental, economic, and social transformations in Japan during the 1970s, all of which filtered into activists' pragmatic ideology and strategy. The environmental crisis from the late 1960s was certainly a key factor, but so too were the value-transforming impact of affluence, the legacies of earlier social movements, and the impact of new ideas on grassroots networking imported from abroad. These factors shaped the environment in which activists formulated their new pragmatic ideology by providing a recipe of strategies, a listening audience, and a bank of learning.

The Environmental Crisis: The environmental crisis of the late 1960s and early 1970s was a crucial facilitating factor in the emergence of proposal-style movements. After a "miraculous" decade of sustained high economic growth during the 1960s, Japan was one of the most polluted nations in the industrialized world with inordinate emission rates for toxic gases such as nitrous oxide. The country's rivers and bays became dumping grounds for industrial waste which, as in the infamous case of Minamata Bay, reentered the food chain reeking havoc on the ecosystem and surrounding human communities. In fact, by 1973 there were some 3,000 local residents' movements protesting against environmental pollution in one form or another. By 1970, pollution had reached such proportions that it became a national political issue. Late in that year the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was left with no choice but to pass some of the most stringent anti-pollution laws in the industrialized world in what was to become known as the "Pollution Diet." Fourteen pieces of legislation submitted for debate were enacted into law with some modification. The legislation covered a broad range of pollution issues including roads, waste management, pesticides, sewage, national parks, and even noise levels.

The mass media also chimed in to the new concern with pollution. The number of articles mentioning "pollution" (*kōgai*) in the *Asahi shinbun* increased dramatically from 84 in 1965 to 2,506 by 1970.[10] Reflecting the rising public concern, from 1974 through 1975, the same newspaper ran an influential serialized novella by the author Ariyoshi Sawako, titled *Fukugō osen* (Complex Pollution). This personal account by Ariyoshi set out in graphic and minute detail the structure and logic of environmental pollution in Japan. But most importantly, for the first time, it turned the spotlight on consumers as

[9] Alberto Melucci. "A Strange Kind of Newness: What's 'New' in New Social Movements?" In Enrique Larana et al., eds. *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p. 102.

complicit "aggressors" (*kagaisha*) in the pollution problem, opening the way for self-examination and, later, individual action.[11] Many in the proposal generation cite Ariyoshi's novel as important not only in awakening them to their complicity in the pollution problem but, more significantly, in opening their eyes to the kinds of realistic solutions ordinary citizens could propose. In this sense, Ariyoshi's work was significant because it opened a new discursive space previously dominated by the logic of accusation and protest.

Coupled with this attention in political and media circles, the proposal generation benefited greatly from less overt, though nonetheless significant, socio-economic transformations underway in 1970s Japan. Affluence clearly facilitated new concerns with respect to health and the environment in mainstream consciousness—concerns which activists skillfully incorporated into their message of proposal. Moreover, Japan's high-growth economy, which on the one hand liberated middle-class women from the household and on the other virtually excluded them from the full-time workforce after marriage, quite inadvertently created a mobile, highly educated, and socially-attuned constituency toward which proposal activists could direct their message.[12]

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[10] Articles in the *Asahi shinbun* mentioning pollution by year:

Year	Articles #	Year	Articles #	Year	Articles #
1965	84	1969	408	1973	1410
1966	170	1970	2506	1974	782
1967	177	1971	1892	1975	1253
1968	230	1972	1644		

My thanks to Chikako Miyamoto of International Christian University for extracting this data from the *Asahi shinbun* CD article database.

[11] Ariyoshi Sawako. *Fukugō osen* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979).

[12] Trends in the nationwide surveys on the Japanese national character provide supporting evidence for changing values with respect to Nature. Respondents were given three choices with respect to the relationship between man and nature: in order to be happy man must (1) follow nature; (2) make use of nature; (3) conquer nature. In 1968, on the eve of the environmental crisis, response percentages were 19%, 40%, and 34% respectively, but by 1973 they had shifted to 31%, 45% and 17% respectively. In other words, there was still strong support for the idea that nature should be utilized, but less support for the idea it should be conquered and more support for the idea it should be followed. If we trace these figures through to 1998, we find that now 49% believed nature should be followed, 39% believed it should be utilized, and only 9% believed it should be conquered.

	Follow Nature	Make Use of Nature	Conquer Nature
1953	26	41	23
1958	20	37	28
1963	19	40	30
1968	19	40	34
1973	31	45	17
1978	33	44	16
1983	36	47	11
1988	42	44	9
1993	48	38	7
1998	49	39	6

Adapted from Research Committee on the Study of the Japanese National Character. *A Study of the Japanese National Character: The Tenth Nationwide Survey* (Tokyo: Institute of Statistical Mathematics, March 1999), p. 51.

Thus, by the mid 1970s, public consciousness vis-à-vis the negative impact of economic development was extremely high as a result of, first, protest movements which exposed rampant pollution, second, government legislation to alleviate this, and third, exponential attention in the media. This national awakening, together with socio-economic changes afforded by affluence, provided a favorable opportunity for activists who could come up with practical solutions or alternatives to the prevailing logic of "violent" industrial development.

Social Movement Legacies: The pragmatic strategy of activists stemmed in large part from their visceral reaction to the movements of the 1960s. Activists learned first hand the limits of social activism, and by consequence, the kind of strategies likely to end in failure. The radicalization and ultimate suppression of the student movement was key because many in the proposal generation either cut their activist teeth during this period, or witnessed its unfolding in the national media. Activists such as Fujita Kazuyoshi and Fujimoto Toshio, who established Daichi in 1974, joined the ranks of the student movement from the latter half of the 1960s when university upheavals reached their peak. As Fujita later recalled, infighting among student groups and the turn in public opinion against students after the violent clash with police at Tokyo University in 1969, forced him to rethink the very notion of social activism. That he and other radicals such as Fujimoto ended up with jail terms only reinforced this feeling. "I learned the limits of accusation and protest in a visceral way," Fujita remembers.[13] Indeed, the message was clear: the structure of conservative rule was almost impenetrable through frontal assault—particularly when supported by constituencies anesthetized by the spoils of growing affluence. Activists who could shed their radical skin and adapt to the conservative environment survived and their ideas came to dominate the social movement sector, while those who could not disappeared along with their message. This was the reality imparted by the 1960s.

Many activists also cite their visceral reaction to the postwar consumer movement as a source of motivation. Fujita Kazuyoshi of Daichi felt that the consumer movement's carte blanche support for consumer issues blinded it to the wider socio-economic structure of mass production and mass consumption. In his interpretation, the consumer movement was ultimately about cheaper prices, and in this sense, really just another player in the market system. Its failure to engage with producers—to see their problems, to empathize with their plight—made the movement into just one more "aggressor." As Takami Yūichi of the Japan Recycling Movement Citizens Association pointed out, proposal-style citizens' movements were almost an "inevitable" reaction to such movements: "[W]hen I looked at the failure of the student movement and the accusation-style of the consumer movement, I thought to myself 'this is wrong'," Takami explains. "One reason for the decline of the consumer movement was its failure to make any proposals to society. I really dislike the term consumer movement. People don't live in the world to merely 'extinguish' and 'use up.' I believe the next movement—the next stage of our engagement with society—will emerge through the very denial of the notion of 'consumer.' In that sense, I really want

[13] Interview with Fujita Kazuyoshi, 3 April 2002.

to end our attachment to the consumer movement."[14]

Yet proposal generation activists were not only reacting to the downfall of the student movement, and nor was earlier social activism wholly negative or devoid of useful strategies and ideas. Though the student movement never achieved its revolutionary goals it was the formative social movement experience for proposal movement activists. Student radicals learned important skills as they forged movements independent from the Japan Communist Party (JCP). Instead of marching to the JCP-led tune, students took independent control of their campus movements in the 1960s. In the process, they learned how to mobilize participants and manage resources—skills put to good use as they pursued new activist careers in the 1970s.[15]

Activists also found the tried-and-true tactic of movement promotion through grassroots publication—he so-called *mini-komi*—an extremely effective means to spread information about their movements. Publications of *mini-komi*, as opposed to *masu-komi* or the mass media, exploded during the 1960s in the wake of the US-Japan Security Treaty protests. Originally mouthpieces for grassroots pacifism and opposition to the treaty, many ultimately shifted focus to issues of democratization in daily life. With the advent of chronic pollution from the late 1960s, *mini-komi* became mouthpieces for local opposition, helping to forge ties and build activist networks among geographically separated residents' movements. Proposal generation activists skillfully adopted the *mini-komi* form, using similar homegrown publications to articulate their new ideology to target groups.[16]

Important too, were the ideological legacies of earlier movements, and in particular, ideas associated with the *shimin* or citizen activist. Here again, the proposal generation's novelty was clearly contingent upon an extant historical legacy. Central in the ideology of proposal-style citizens' movements were notions of internal democracy, individual responsibility, autonomy, horizontal organization, political non-alignment, and part-time participation. These were not new ideas. Indeed, grassroots activists had been debating, testing, and refining such issues from at least the 1950s when small cultural and learning circles (*sākuru*) began to mobilize in workplaces and in association with academic groups. The Security Treaty struggle in 1960 also proved to be important in this ideological development as activist-intellectuals attempted to define the contours of a new political subject different from the student activist, the party member, or the proletarian.[17] Intellectuals such as Tsurumi Shunsuke and Kuno Osamu spoke for the first time of "political citizens" (*seijiteki shimin*) who were motivated not by devotion to a vanguard-produced

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[14] "Extinguish" and "use up" are the two characters for the Japanese compound meaning "consume" (*shōhi*). Instead of *shōhisha* (consumer) many in this generation and after prefer to use *seikatsusha* (lit. "daily life person"), a term close to Habermas' "inhabitant of the life world." Banana Bōto Jikkō Iinkai, ed. *Inochi, shizen, kurashi: Banana bōto—Mōhitotsu no seikatsu o tsukuru nettowākāzu no funade*, 16–17; Jürgen Habermas. "New Social Movements." In *Telos*, no. 49 (1981), pp. 33–37.

[15] My thanks to Patricia Steinhoff for this insight.

[16] For a historical discussion and introduction to some representative *mini-komi* see Maruyama Hisashi. *Mini-komi no dōjidaishi* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1985).

[17] See Wesley Sasaki-Uemura. *Organizing the Spontaneous: Citizen Protest in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), for a detailed study on the significance of the Anpo protests in postwar citizen activism.

ideology, but rather, a pragmatic attachment to daily life as an autonomous realm worth defending. Such ideas reverberated among many normal individuals who felt unease with the domestic and international implications of conservative rule, yet were unwilling to align themselves with the established left.

With the advent of the anti-Vietnam War movement, *Beheiren*, from the mid-1960s, ideas on citizen activism reached new levels of sophistication, as intellectuals like Oda Makoto redefined the ordinary citizen as both an "aggressor" and a "victim" within postwar Japanese society. *Beheiren*, with its loose organizational style and focus on individual responsibility and action, turned the critical eye inwards, using this self-reflexive posture as a basis for social activism. Though the proposal generation turned away from the anti-establishment rhetoric and praxis of *Beheiren*, it clearly drew on the movement's self reflexive impulse. Thus, we must recognize that underlying the conceptual breakthroughs of activists in the proposal generation was an almost two-decade long intellectual legacy addressing the fundamental questions of agency, ethos, organization, and strategy within citizens' movements. In their eagerness to promote newness, proposal generation activists more often than not overlooked these important legacies imparted by decades of earlier activism.

Learning from Abroad: Finally, the proposal generation also drew on strategies and conceptual developments from abroad, particularly networking theory imported from the United States. Through such theoretical discovery, activists learned how their self-styled networking model could become a tool for overcoming the disadvantages of smallness, decentralization, and institutional rigidity. Practical guides to networking theory, such as Lipnack and Stamps landmark work, *Networking: The First Report and Directory*, were translated into Japanese almost as soon as they were published abroad, and activists traveled to the US and Europe to study the activities of domestic and international non-profit organizations.[18] Such exposure taught activists that SMOs need not cling to amateurism and informality as marks of authenticity. The US example proved that pragmatic professionalization led to sustainability and not necessarily cooptation. The question, of course, was whether or not such models could work within Japan's conservative institutional environment—a challenge activists began to take up from the early 1970s.

3. Case Study: The Association to Preserve the Earth

Theoretical Foundations

In 1974, Fujita Kazuyoshi was very much an activist in search of a movement. Born in Iwate prefecture in 1947, he went on to study at Sophia University in Tokyo. Fujita entered university at a crucial moment in the history of postwar Japanese social activism. His experiences in the increasingly radical student movement became the foundation of his approach to social activism. "Our 60s and 70s style struggles were an attempt to overcome modernism (*kindaishugi*)," Fujita recalls, "but looking back,

[18] Jessica Lipnack and Jeffrey Stamps. *Networking: The First Report and Directory* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1982). Lipnack and Stamps also visited Japan in the mid 1980s to discuss networking on the invitation of Japanese citizen activists (Interview with Harima Yasuo, 22 April 2003).

I don't think we ever transcended the framework of modernism we were trying to overcome."[19]

The student movement experience convinced Fujita that accusation-style movements were ultimately self-destructive, since dogmatism ruptured their sensitivity to daily life. Outright opposition, regardless of its ethical purity, did not produce anything and in the end amounted to no more than self-indulgence. As the dispute at the New Tokyo International Airport at Narita proved—a dispute in which Fujita became involved as a student radical—opposition only led to stalemate, and in some cases, violence at the hands of the state. The mistake of student radicals at Narita had been to focus on broad, abstract issues such as "Japanese Imperialism" or the "*Amakudari* State." In fact, the Narita problem, Fujita eventually concluded, could only be solved as a single issue in its own "small universe." To be sure, Narita was linked at the very deepest level to the political and economic structure of conservative rule, but this did not automatically demand a movement of similar scale. The failed history of the student movement proved this. Complex modern societies were built on a basis of many smaller embedded universes. Social movements, to be successful, would have to attack the overall problem by engaging in specific problems located in specific universes. But Fujita's views on social activism were not only shaped by the legacy of radicalism. For Fujita, both the labor and the consumer movements had gone too far in the opposite direction. By replacing ideals with specific demands—wage rises, shorter working hours—they were ultimately coopted by the system, becoming nothing more than economic utilitarians.[20] The consumer cooperative was a typical example in Fujita's view: by focusing on the consumer with little or no regard for the producer, such movements helped sustain the system of mass-production and mass-consumption, and by connection, the intensive use of pesticides. Falling for the rhetoric of the "free market," coops became perpetrators and aggressors, compelling farmers to use pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. Surely, Fujita thought, there must be an alternative to the extremes of radicalism and utilitarianism.

It was around this time in the early-1970s that Fujita met a doctor engaged in natural pesticide research, and subsequently hit on the small universe of "food" and "agriculture" as one way to reform the universal via the specific. After all, the small universe of food represented a "central artery" (*kansen*) in the process of life, so it should also be a concentration of all the contradictions in wider society. Through a social movement focused on "food and agriculture," Fujita believed he could realize "specific universality" (*gutaiteki fuhensei*). Of course, on a practical level, the object need not necessarily be food. As Fujita remarked: "Right now, we are dealing with agricultural problems, but medicine and education are exactly the same." In the same way that farmers and consumers form alternative systems, so too could doctors and patients, or schools and students. The point was that overall problems needed to be tackled through specific universes.[21]

Fujita translated the idea of small universes into his model of an SMO. On the one hand, SMOs needed to become self-supporting (*jiritsu shita*). In terms of internal structure, movements had to discard

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[19] Fujita Kazuyoshi and Komatsu Kōichi. *Inochi to kurashi wo mamoru kabushiki gaisha* (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 1992), p. 53.

[20] Ibid., p. 80.

[21] Ibid., pp. 80–81.

the old pyramid-style in favor of a series of inter-linked, yet autonomous, localized movements. On this point, Daichi could draw on the earlier experience of movements such as Beheiren, which experimented with a loose network style in the 1960s. But Fujita developed his notion of movement self-support to include an economic element, which went beyond earlier citizens' movements. Once again, he drew on the bitter experience at Narita Airport. There students had had to rely on membership fees to pay for necessities such as helmets and weapons—hardly a sustainable source of income. True independence, as Fujita saw it, was nothing other than the creation of "material strength" internally. So long as movements relied on donations and "free lunches" (*gochisō*), their members would not become independent. Activists had to "aim for an organization whereby people can earn a living via the movement, wherein they can feed themselves via the movement." This philosophy ultimately led Fujita and his associates to the idea of incorporating Daichi into a stock company—a move which took it beyond the limits of earlier cooperative and citizens' movements.[22] Takami Yūichi of the Japan Recycling Movement Citizens' Association succinctly articulates the logic behind such decisions: "[O]ver the past ten years I have continuously restated the easily-misinterpreted idea of 'making a living through citizens' movements' (*shimin undō de meshi o kū*)….I don't think the popular term volunteer (*borantia*) should be valorized.…I just want citizens' movements to give up the idea that everyone has to bring their own lunch. I can't go along with such dogma. Underlying the idea of 'making a living through citizens' movements' is our desire to raise societal awareness vis-à-vis the existence of so-called NPOs….To put it rather crudely, company employees work for the organization, NPO activists work for society."[23]

But, on the other hand, while Fujita's model of an SMO called for self-sufficiency, it also warned of the dangers of "communalism" (*kyōdōtaishugi*). The ultimate aim was to provide an alternative to current socio-economic realities so, from the very outset, Daichi's leaders aimed at an open, network-style of movement in touch with wider society. If Daichi created an exclusive commune of farmers and consumers, it would lose touch with the mainstream. Fujita wanted to bring about social change through activism in specific social universes, but he did not want to create social movement islands. Harima Yasuo of the Dandelion House movement for the disabled echoed a similar sentiment: "[W]e realized that Japanese organizations have a tendency to end up like Maruyama Masao's 'octopus pots,' so that is why we imported networking theory from the US." "Networking gave us an opportunity to relativize ourselves and keep things in perspective. Once [our networks] became internationalized, we could compare Japan with the outside world." Like Fujita, most in the proposal generation were convinced that only open-ended movements could overcome the tendency for organizational isolation in Japanese citizens' movements.

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[22] Ibid., pp. 83–84.

[23] Takami carried this same sentiment into his campaign for an NPO Law from the mid-1990s while a member of the House of Representatives. Instead of an NPO Law, Takami originally wanted an NGO Law (Non-Government Organization) because the latter would allow civil society organizations to purse profits and "make a living" (Interview, 17 June 2002). He makes a similar argument in his book, *Deru kui ni naru: NGO de meshi o kū*. For the original quote see Banana Bōto Jikkō Iinkai, ed. *Inochi, shizen, kurashi: Banana bōto—Mōhitotsu no seikatsu o tsukuru nettowākāzu no funade*, pp. 34–35.

Fujita thus imagined Daichi as a principled, yet pragmatic and open movement that would avoid the dual polarities of idealism on the one hand, and economism on the other. Of course, balancing ideals and economics would not be easy. Would members be willing to pay more for produce because it cost farmers more to grow organically? Would they accept deliveries of insect damaged produce as part of their involvement in the movement? Would they part with the convenience of going to the supermarket to purchase any kind of produce they desired? These were real challenges facing Daichi's leaders as they attempted to grow their movement from the mid 1970s. In the end, success would hinge on two factors: the formation of realistic solutions to these problems, and the degree to which they could convince potential members that these solutions were indeed realistic—in other words, the persuasive power of their discourse of proposal.

Members and Shareholders: Mobilizing a Movement

From its inception in 1975 until early 1977, Daichi operated on a customer base of only 200 to 300 people, roughly organized into about 20 collective purchasing stations in the Tokyo area.[24] The fact that 200 to 300 people would join their movement gave Fujita and his colleagues confidence in the quality of their produce and their message. But the reality was that with such small numbers the movement would never be self-sustaining. If Fujita's ideas were to function as a truly effective mobilizing force they needed to reach a wider audience than that provided by word of mouth.

The solution came in April 1977 when, with support from the Seibu Department Store, Daichi held a "Pesticide-free Vegetable Fair" in the store's *Shopping Park* at Ikebukuro station in Tokyo. Together with vocalist Katō Tokiko, "guest salespersons" included actress Nakayama Chiatsu, actor Ei Rokusuke, commentator Yoshitake Teruko, and novelist Nosaka Akiyuki.[25] Fujita views this vegetable fair as a crucial event in Daichi's development. After attention in the mass media, the member base surged immediately from 300 to around 800 and, more importantly, Daichi's message now reached many more ears than it had to date. As Fujita recalls: "We figured that if these 800 members told just ten friends about the movement we would be able to reach self-sufficiency." His prediction turned out to be correct: what was a movement of 20 stations before the April event rose to 200 member stations by late 1977, comprising a total membership of over 1,000.[26]

But this spectacular growth brought with it a new set of challenges that forced Fujita and his associates to rethink their developmental plans for Daichi. While the movement was still small it could rely on financial support from Fujimoto Toshio and his celebrity wife, Katō Tokiko. But as operations expanded Daichi's leaders realized the limitations of relying on individuals—particularly in matters financial. In simple terms, Daichi could not continue to grow if it remained an informal "association." "We couldn't even borrow money to buy a delivery truck—Fujimoto had to do it in his own name," Fujita recalls. Economic realities thus called for some kind of organizational transformation.

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[24] Fujita interview, 3 April 2002.

[25] Fujita and Komatsu, *Inochi to kurashi wo mamoru kabushiki gaisha*, p. 65.

[26] Fujita interview, 3 April 2002.

Until the enactment of Japan's Special Nonprofit Organization Law in 1998, civil society organizations in Japan were stifled by "one of the most antagonistic regulatory frameworks among industrialized democracies."[27] Specifically, articles in the 1896 Uniform Civil Code made it extremely difficult for civil society organizations to gain legal status as so-called nonprofit public-interest legal persons. In effect, this meant that groups either had to remain informal (in a legal sense) or, in some cases, choose the path of incorporation. While the former path was certainly less complicated, as Daichi discovered in the late 1970s, the lack of legal status proved a significant barrier to organizational expansion and sustainability. The path of informality meant that groups could not "open bank accounts, hire staff, own property, sign lease agreements for office space, undertake joint projects with domestic government bodies, or even, on a mundane level, lease a photocopy machine."[28] In Daichi's case, it was not only a photocopy machine, but also a delivery truck. Moreover, as the number of staff members increased, questions relating to labor standards and staff insurance also surfaced. Operating as a "private store" (*kojin shōten*), while simple, obviously had its limitations.

It was around this time that Fujita and his associates began to meet together regularly on Fridays to discuss their ideas for the future of Daichi. These meetings, which they informally called the "Friday Group" (*Kin'yō no Kai*), ultimately laid the foundations for Daichi's organizational structure and the Association's ideas vis-à-vis the organic movement in Japan. The Friday Group's brainstorming on organizational form reveals how ideas were a crucial factor shaping the strategy of proposal and the approach of such movements to conservative institutions.

As the Friday Group discussed Daichi's options, they realized there was another possible organizational form: the consumer cooperative. But as Fujita explains, from the very outset the group was opposed to the coop form on a number of ideological grounds. First, legal stipulations meant that becoming a cooperative would have forced Daichi to break up its operations into legally independent prefectural units. Division, all agreed, would only produce isolated prefecture-level "octopus pots" with little need to interact outside their own membership of producers and consumers. This conflicted with the group's concept of networking and represented the kind of "communalism" that Fujita wanted to avoid. Second, the cooperative model potentially diverged from Daichi's ideal of organizational independence. Official recognition by prefectural bureaucracies as a lifestyle cooperative union, the group worried, might ultimately compromise Daichi's independence.[29] Third, the consumer cooperative model conflicted with Daichi's vision of the organic food movement. In the end, consumer cooperatives were only interested in price. They may give lip service to the plight of farmers, but when push came to shove, they always came down on the side of the consumer and lower prices. Conversely, Daichi was in search of a holistic solution that embraced, rather than accused or ostracized, farmers, so conversion into

[27] Robert Pekkanen. "Japan's New Politics: The Case of the NPO Law." In *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2000), p. 111.

[28] Ibid., p. 113.

[29] In my meetings with Fujita he repeatedly expressed his desire to avoid any bureaucratic interference in Daichi's operations.

a consumer cooperative made no sense at all.[30]

Similar ideological reservations, coupled with legal restrictions on membership numbers and capital base, also prevented Daichi from becoming either a corporate juridical person (*shadan hōjin*) or a legally incorporated foundation (*zaidan hōjin*). The only pathways were to remain a "private store" or to incorporate as a stock company (*kabushiki gaisha*). In September 1977, Fujita and his Friday Group chose the latter. The influence of legal barriers certainly was a key factor in this decision. But we miss some important details if we fail to take our analysis beyond the effect of such institutions. Indeed, institutions can only partly tell us why Daichi rejected the cooperative model. Moreover, they tell us almost nothing with respect to the specifics of the company Daichi ultimately created. After all, how would the Association to Protect the Earth—a group which claimed to be an alternative to the leviathan of mass production and mass consumption—maintain its principles, and at the same time adopt an organizational form that lay at the very heart of the modern market system?

The answer, as it turned out, lay in the past, as Daichi drew on the pool of strategies formulated by earlier movements. By loosely implementing a single share system (one share per member), similar to that used by *Beheiren*, Minamata activists, and other movements in the early 1970s, Daichi could simultaneously avoid creating "oppressive violent capital," and promote its basic principles of individual participation and internal democracy. Daichi would use the single share model to propose a different style of company driven not by the bottom-line desire for profit, but instead, the transformation in patterns of agriculture, distribution, and consumption. As Fujita explained, stock capital was really an empty vessel into which the modern market had inserted its own interpretation. But this was not the only interpretation possible. Drawing on Beheiren's reconceptualization of the "share," Daichi could propose a new kind of company and in the process become the model for a new socio-economic order.

The adoption of a single share model, according to Fujita, solved one of the greatest flaws of Japanese social and cooperative movements. Previously, employees (*shokuin*) in unions, coops and the like were not considered members of the movement. Officially, they were merely office staff. "In reality, however, [they] controlled the movement, and this produced Japanese style bureaucratization. Members had no agency. Instead, office bureaucrats, under the guise of officialdom—indeed by brandishing this pretense (*tatemae*)—skillfully manipulated movements." But Daichi Incorporated would be different. Staff would be shareholders too, empowered to make proposals and guide the movement openly as equals with consumers and producers. If consumer-members failed to exercise their rights as shareholders, they could potentially lose out. Of course, in reality, Fujita expected that this system would lead to more rather than less participation, creating an environment in which all members took responsibility for pursuing their own interests. This would make Daichi different from run-of-the-mill, for-profit stock companies.

The articulation of innovative ideas by Fujita and other leaders at this stage proved crucial in translating the Friday Group's ideas into reality. Drawing on, and further developing, ideas and attitudes that had been percolating within citizens' movements for over two decades, Daichi's leaders set about

[30] Fujita interview, 3 April 2002; Fujita and Komatsu, *Inochi to kurashi wo mamoru kabushiki gaisha*, pp. 104–105.

reframing their movement as a professional, locally-organized network of like-minded individuals. Leaders consciously avoided rigid ideological discourse in favor of a pragmatic ethos based on the affirmation of daily life. In keeping with the movement's support for Japanese farmers, Daichi set about convincing consumer-members that limited use of pesticides was unavoidable given current realties, and hence had to be accepted. Instead of an all-or-nothing approach, Daichi argued that eradication of pesticides was a goal to be achieved through cooperation between consumers and producers. The Association would only ask members to do what they could. Farmer-members would promise to avoid pesticide use "as much as possible," and consumer-members would partially sacrifice their freedom of product choice in return for a promise of variety and safety. But, as explained above, the most innovative proposal of the Friday Group was to convert the organization into an incorporated stock company with thousands of single shareholders: in other words, to transform citizen activism into a capitalist project.

Daichi's leaders presented their ideas for the stock company to members in September 1977 in a proposal titled "For the Development of a New Life Industry." Members would be asked to invest 5,000 yen for a single par-value share in the company. Fujita decided on this amount because, on the one hand, this was the minimum level required to raise the necessary capital, and on the other, was an amount housewives could invest without their husbands' knowledge. Moreover, as Fujita explains, it was an amount housewives would probably be willing to lose in the event the company went bust. The following extract from the 1977 proposal is a typical example of the discursive strategy used by Daichi to conceptualize its new social movement model, and for this reason deserves reproduction at length.

For the Development of a New Life Industry

Building on the experience and achievements of two years of [Daichi] activism, we intend to establish "Daichi Incorporated." Rather than simply another stock company, we want to create an organization in which everyone will participate, and in that way protect the interests of all people connected to the company. Producers, consumers, and those who contribute at the distribution stage will all be the shareholders who form this "stock company contributing to the lives and health of people." [Our enterprise] will not be [based on] the questionable "bottom-line profit motive," and opposition between producers and consumers will be non-existent. This is because [our] company's first priority will be to "guard the interests of shareholders." […]

We will establish "Daichi Incorporated" to protect life and health, and also as a lively dialogue with nature. This company must not start out as one which protects the interests of a particular group, or is manipulated by a specific stratum of people. To this end, the following represent the founding principles of our company. By staying faithful to these principles, Daichi Incorporated will be able to fulfill its social mission and its social responsibility.

(1) Daichi Inc. will proactively contribute to the reconceptualization of diet, which sustains human existence, and agriculture, which sustains societal existence. Moreover, by growing, distributing, and consuming safe, delicious, and nutritious foods we want to fulfill our responsibility toward the current age and the future.

(2) In keeping with the aspirations our age, Daichi Inc.'s primary principle will be "to protect life and health." We will do this by protecting nature, by harmonizing social relations, and by doing work that, in terms of human daily life, is self-fulfilling.

(3) Daichi Inc. must be run so that the flow of people, goods and information is not impeded. By impediments, we refer to bureaucratized and exclusionary human relations, speculative trading of produce, or secretive, misleading use of information. We will establish Daichi Corporation as an "open stock company" (*hirakareta kabushiki gaisha*) without impediments to the flow of people, goods, or information. It will be a corporation engaged in a landmark endeavor.[31]

Daichi's mobilizing efforts were extremely successful. At a par-value of 5000 yen, Daichi Inc. managed to raise 16 million yen—a total of 3,200 shares. Katō Tokiko invested 4.5 million yen, making her the largest shareholder with some 900 (26%) shares. This meant that the remaining 2,300 shares were spread among a membership approaching 2000—close to Fujita's ideal of a single share distribution.[32] On 3 December 1977, shareholders in the new company met at Daichi's office in a Baptist hall in Shinjuku. Answering criticisms in the media and from other grassroots organizations, Fujimoto Toshio—Daichi's first president—defended the decision to incorporate on the basis of "movement independence" and because this decision would "create a movement in which producers and consumers were united." Moreover, unlike agricultural associations (*nōkyō*) or consumer coops (*seikyō*), Daichi Inc. would not be bound by bureaucratic rules and regulations.[33]

Defending the Message of Proposal

Of course not all corners of society agreed with Fujita's idea of SMOs becoming stock companies. From the time they first aired the idea until at least the mid 1980s, Daichi's leaders came in for severe criticism from both producer and consumer organizations. Beginning in the early 1980s, Daichi faced a constant barrage of criticism from the Japan Organic Agriculture Association (JOAA) for "creating unnecessary barriers between consumers and producers," and from the consumer movement for its decision to become a stock company instead of a coop. Moreover, in 1982, Daichi came under the spotlight in the mainstream press when a high-circulation monthly magazine, drawing on discord within the movement, published an article questioning the very validity of the movement's supposedly "organic" produce.

Fujita and his associates were quick to respond to these criticisms since they realized the survival of the movement depended as much—if not more—on the legitimacy of Daichi's message as it did on the authenticity or "organic-ness" of farmers' produce. As explained above, Fujita wanted to create a movement, first and foremost, to transform consumer attitudes, so from the outset movement ideology and its articulation by activists received close attention. This was true of most other movements claiming

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[31] Fujita and Komatsu, *Inochi to kurashi o mamoru kabushiki gaisha*, pp. 107–109.

[32] Katō Tokiko's shares were later sold to individual members.

[33] Fujita and Komatsu, *Inochi to kurashi wo mamoru kabushiki gaisha*, p. 109.

to propose alternatives in the early 1970s: proponents of recycling had to justify the use of second-hand goods in the face of rising affluence; peace activists needed to convince a skeptical audience that grassroots dialogue between nations was a productive alternative to official diplomacy; and advocates for the physically and mentally impaired had to explain how disabled people could be creative and productive in a complex, technological society. In short, the challenge for the proposal generation was to convince a skeptical public that politicians, bureaucrats, academics, and corporate leaders did not have a monopoly on innovation, and that normal people could change their society from the bottom up using strategies other than protest or revolution; hence, the vigor with which Daichi and others responded to critics and defended their proposals in the public sphere. Though certainly a threat to the authenticity of Daichi, external criticisms actually had a positive impact in that they forced Fujita and others to clarify to their constituency just what a "proposal-style citizens' movement" meant in practice.

Daichi's greatest public challenge came in the form of an exposé titled "Distinguishing the Facts and Falsities of Natural Foods" in the October 1982 edition of the monthly magazine, *Ushio*.[34] The article's author, Hiraoka Yōichi, claimed that the recent boom in "natural" "safe" foods was, in fact, built on a series of untruths. Specifically, he declared that organic producers regularly used synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and that organic retailers were well aware of this practice. Moreover, based on his own investigations, Hiraoka pointed out that the label "pesticide-free" did not amount to "non-pesticide use," but merely that inspected produce did not reveal significant residual levels. "In other words," he argued, "the vast majority of processed foods [in organic stores] are by no means pesticide-free. It is simply that no residual pesticides are detected."[35]

Hiraoka laid out his attack on Daichi towards the end the same article under the ominous subtitle "Organic Farming Laid Waste." Here Hiraoka recounted his experiences in the farming town of Tamazukuri in Tochigi prefecture. "I heard about Iida Mitsugu, an organic farmer in Tamazukuri-chō who was extremely upset about dishonest practices among other organic farmers, so I decided to pay him a visit." Hiraoka described how Tamazukuri-chō had become a kind of "organic farming Mecca." Local farmers contracted with distributors—primarily Daichi—who in turn delivered their produce directly to consumers and organic retail outlets in the Kantō region. He explained how Iida had engaged in organic farming for about ten years, during which time Daichi distributed his produce. But as a result of Daichi's "halfhearted" (*iikagensa*) practices he withdrew from the organization about a year ago. According to Iida, of the fifteen or sixteen organic farmers in Tamazukuri-chō, all were "phonies" (*inchiki*). Iida based his criticism on four facts. First, farmers did not make their own compost but merely spread manure and in some cases human feces. As a result, produce was easily diseased, and in the end most had no choice but to use pesticides. Second, tomatoes and cucumbers were being cultivated in plastic greenhouses. Third, it was common practice for organic farmers to purchase damaged produce from regular farmers and ship it as "organic." And fourth, in the same way, organic farmers often purchased damaged produce on the retail market and reshipped it as "organic produce." And even worse, Hiraoka claimed that Daichi

[34] Hiraoka Yōichi. "Shizenshokuhin no uso to hontō no miwakekata." In *Ushio* (October 1982), pp. 182–191.

[35] Ibid., p. 184.

"knows full-well of these practices and yet it remains silent."[36]

Hiraoka recounted his visit to one of the farms in the area with Iida Mitsugu. "The cucumber leaves were infected with Donwy Mildew and had turned a yellowish color. Actually, most of them were withered. There was a large plastic greenhouse with a boiler attached, and inside tomatoes were being cultivated. To be sure, there was a sign outside reading 'Organic Farming Area.' There was a huge pile of black, solidified manure that had been exposed to the rain. 'This won't end up as compost, it will just rot,' Mr. Iida commented." But perhaps most damaging of all for Daichi was Hiraoka's interview with Horita Tatsurō, leader of the organic farming group that shipped its produce via the Association. "Of course, Mr. Horita didn't say that he *himself* was doing so," Hiraoka recounted, "but he admitted that others were using pesticides when he said 'there are various kinds of people selling vegetables on the premise of organic farming methods. Some of them use pesticides, some do not'."[37]

What then of Daichi's response? "The Association to Preserve the Earth does not deny the use of pesticides," Hiraoka reported. "But they say these are…vegetable-based, and moreover, are utilized far less than normal [farms]." For example, in the case of tomatoes, organic farmers working with Daichi only sprayed vegetable-based pesticides six to ten times in one growth cycle, as opposed to the normal practice of ten to twenty times. For bell peppers, Daichi farmers sprayed a maximum of three times as opposed to the usual six to ten times. Daichi admitted that its fruit farmers used synthetic chemical pesticides, but that they did so in a much reduced way. To Hiraoka's suggestion that such practices hardly differed from regular farming methods, the Daichi representative "cleverly" commented: "[Farmers] are required to report vis-à-vis fertilizers used for contracted produce, and we have faith in this. Though we do indeed contract with farmers, we do not contract with the totality of their fields. So it may be the case that they use pesticides and chemical fertilizers on areas not under contract."[38] For Hiraoka, however, the sum total of these practices in the "natural food" market ultimately left consumers with only one choice: "In the end there may be no other way but to purchase produce directly from an organic farmer you can trust and then clean it yourself."[39]

For Fujita, Hiraoka's critical article in *Ushio* was a classic example of the misguided accusatory logic of the 1960s, and while it posed a serious threat to Daichi's legitimacy, it also provided an excellent opportunity for Fujita to articulate Daichi's alternative model for production, distribution, and consumption. Fujita's response to Hiraoka appeared in the December 1982 edition of *Ushio*—two months after the original article. "From my reading of this article," Fujita began, "I can only conclude that the author, Mr. Hiraoka, has misunderstood today's organic farming movement in a fundamental way." As Fujita explained, the organic farming movement originally stemmed from a coming together of aspirations. On the one hand, consumers wanted to purchase safe produce, and on the other, farmers felt more and more uncomfortable with the pesticide-intensive agriculture demanded by the market. With the enactment of the Basic Law on Agriculture (*Nōgyō kihon hō*) in 1961, the Ministry of Agriculture,

[36] Ibid., pp. 188–189.

[37] Ibid., p. 189.

[38] Ibid., p. 190.

[39] Ibid., p. 191.

Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) fervently implemented a policy of agricultural modernization. This policy, according to Fujita, was itself part of the more general postwar project of returning Japan to international society as a major industrial nation. Agriculture, like all other areas of the economy, was subject to a form of "forced industrialization." In return for their loyal obedience to this project, the government promised farmers a "bright future." But the reality, however, was different.[40]

"Seeing the affluent, convenient society of the cities, youths began to abandon farming villages […] With a decreased working population [farmers] had to rely more and more on mechanization, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers." Furthermore, "produce in short supply was imported, all in the name of the 'international division of labor'." In return, Japan sent its textiles, electronics, and automobiles out onto the world market. "Japan achieved high economic growth as an industrialized nation; amid cries for mass production and mass consumption it made the 'affluent and convenient society' a reality—it was indeed a brilliant national policy." But there was a price to be paid for this national success: "convenience" obliged farmers to break with the natural cycle. Consumers wanted to eat tomatoes and cucumbers in winter and the only way to do this was with pesticides, mechanization, and chemical fertilizers. The result was new forms of plant disease, decreases in soil fertility, the creation of wasteland, and ultimately a kind of "vicious cycle of drug dependence" in agriculture. The more farmers relied on chemical fertilizers, the more they needed them. Moreover, constantly exposed to synthetic chemical agents, farmers themselves started to become sick. This, Fujita suggested, was the true legacy of MAFF's fanatical campaign for modernization in agriculture after 1961.[41] "But it's not that anyone [in particular] was to blame," Fujita pointed out, rather "this is how our pursuit of an 'affluent and convenient daily life' ended up. In the midst of high growth both farmers and urban consumers were gratified by convenience and affluence. [It was both] who promoted mass consumption, squandered natural resources, increased environmental destruction, and devastated agriculture to a point from which it could never return." All of this was the starting point of the organic farming movement.[42]

"More than anything else, a change in consumer mentality was called for….That is, an absolutely vital element of this movement had to be close cooperation constructed on a basis of deep trust between producers and consumers." Agriculture did not turn for the worse of its own accord. It happened, according to Fujita, because "[w]e Japanese, as a totality," demanded an "affluent and convenient society." "Without a second thought we gave our children food filled with preservatives because it was 'convenient and easy.' We used synthetic soaps. Without a hint of hesitation, we used electricity produced at nuclear power stations as though this was totally normal. We seized the latest electronic and manufactured goods that appeared [on the market] one after another. We continued to squander petroleum. If there is such a thing as a trend of the times, then we—all of us—joined together to produce this trend." Here Fujita approached the crux of his argument.[43] "The thing I want to problematize,"

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[40] Fujita Kazuyoshi. " 'Shizenshokuhin no uso to hontō no miwakekata' e no hanron." In *Ushio* (December 1982), pp. 328–329.

[41] Ibid., pp. 329–330.

[42] Ibid., p. 330.

[43] Ibid.

Fujita continued, "is Hiraoka's preconception that organic farmers must not use pesticides or chemical fertilizers….It is consumers' self-righteousness and lack of understanding of farmers that produces such a preconception….To simplify things, let's say for example that the farmers Hiraoka refers to are actually using pesticides and chemical fertilizers. What is missing from this article is any explanation as to why farmers are forced to use pesticides and chemical fertilizers [in the first place]." What Hiraoka failed to point out was that all Japanese—he included—were responsible for creating a system and a society in which farmers have no choice but to resort to such methods. "In other words, [Hiraoka] and I too are the aggressors (*kagaisha*) who create such a society. At the very least we bear some of the responsibility. This is something we need to realize."[44]

Sixteen years earlier in 1966, Oda Makoto first articulated his idea of the individual citizen as aggressor in the Vietnam War. Ariyoshi Sawako did this again in the early 1970s, characterizing consumers as aggressors. Now, in 1982, Fujita Kazuyoshi used the same logic to conceptualize Daichi's approach to consumption and production. But unlike Beheiren, and similar to Ariyoshi, Fujita and his associates took this logic beyond the realm of criticism and accusation. All Japanese—farmers and consumers—were implicated in the postwar project of economic growth and environmental destruction. Yet there was no ground to be made through continued accusation. Consumers needed to rethink their approach to consumption, they had to reconsider their role in creating the "vicious circle" of pesticide dependence and, above all, they needed to reappraise their own expectations vis-à-vis the kind of demands they would make on organic farmers.

Fujita, in fact, had been developing this logic since Daichi's inception in the mid 1970s under the rubric of organic produce as "food for thought" (*kangaeru sozai*). Within this alternative logic, an insect-damaged organic *daikon* radish was no longer "unsellable produce," but rather was conceptualized as "food for thought." As consumers removed insect-damaged portions, as they made allowances for misshapen produce, as they washed off residual soil—as they did all these things they would simultaneously learn something important about their role in the food cycle as produce moved from the field to the kitchen. Moreover, their acceptance of such produce would be a pragmatic expression of the desire to break away from their earlier role as consumer-aggressors. Thus, participation in Daichi was as much about transformation of individual values and practices as it was about obtaining organic produce. It is this emphasis on individuals changing, indeed, reforming, their own patterns of life that distinguishes Daichi and other cohort organizations from the 1960s generation of citizen activism. The critical eye turned inwards and became self-reflexive. But more than this, proposal generation activists put a pragmatic spin on this self-reflexivity, connecting it directly to real solutions in the real world. Fujita articulated this sentiment to members succinctly in 1981.

> Obtaining safe produce is not in itself the objective of our movement. Rather, the origin of our movement is a reconsideration—through the process of obtaining safe-to-eat produce—of the age in which we are living and of our lifestyle. To this end, agricultural produce is our "food for

[44] Ibid., p. 331.

> thought"….Nobody wants to eat vegetables covered in pesticides. But we too have played a role in creating this situation, and have no right to look at farmers and say: "Hey, your use of pesticides is a mistake!" Moreover, it should come as no surprise if we are criticized as personifications of egotism for racing back and forth in search of safe food.…Yet we are given no choice but to do so. We have no choice but to pursue safe foods, fully conscious of the fact that our behavior has been self-centered. Such humility is the only way we can avoid the error of succumbing to egotism. We need to escape from a world in which others are criticized and denounced, where people abuse each other, and fight for things.…You want organic vegetables, don't you? I want them too. Our movement will stand at its starting point for the first time, when we create a world in which people begin to think about what they can do together.[45]

The innovative ways in which Daichi's leaders answered their critics during the early 1980s were a crucial element in helping the movement solidify its social credibility as both a business and an SMO and, moreover, in establishing the legitimacy of the proposal generation's strategy. By 1985, Daichi boasted a membership of 3000, and after the introduction of an individual home delivery system that year, membership increased rapidly, currently standing at around 50,000.[46] To be sure, not all—or even most—of these 50,000 members consider themselves citizen activists. Most are ordinary people (mainly housewives) who join out of a desire to obtain safe produce. Most are probably not interested in laying the basis for a new civilization. Yet, as Fujita argues, Daichi members, simply by way of their membership, tacitly express their consent with respect to values that guide the organization's operations. By becoming members and by purchasing Daichi produce, consumers directly support Daichi's activist agenda and its message of proposal.

4. Conclusion

To the skeptical eye, Daichi's leaders may have "commodified" a set of ideas better left outside the market system. True or not, there is no doubt that the ideas themselves—and specifically, their pragmatic standpoint—appealed to target constituencies, influenced members' behavior, and ultimately, impacted on movement organization. When activists at the center of the proposal generation organized a cruise to the Islands of Okinawa in October 1986, they mobilized over 500 individuals from some 170 citizens' movements around Japan. Though the official aim of their cruise was to forge links with young organic banana farmers in the prefecture—hence the tour's title, *The Banana Boat Cruise* — it proved to be much more. For the first time, citizen activists openly, and with one voice, acknowledged the shift in grassroots social movement praxis from protest to proposal. In August of the same year, the high-circulation progressive weekly, the *Asahi Journal*, ran an article titled "The New Wave of Lifestyle Proposal-style Citizens' Movements," in which it announced that the Banana Boat Cruise would be "the very first networking space for proposal-style citizens' movements throughout Japan."[47] The hype was not

[45] "Yūki nōgyō undō no atarashii nagare o tsukuru tame ni." In *Daichi*, no. 37 (10 May 1981), p. 1.

[46] Fujita interview, 3 April 2002.

misplaced. Together with activist groups on the cruise, over 1,300 other groups registered their names for a networking list to be published by *Hon no Ki*, a small Tokyo publishing house. As *Hon no Ki*'s owner, Shibata Keizō, later recounted, this in itself was a revolutionary event. "By 1986, most citizen groups weren't afraid to put such information in a list," Shibata notes. "They were no longer afraid that the government would put them on some kind of hit list. There was no risk in going public."[48] For better or worse, then, by 1986 the citizen movement landscape had undergone major changes, and it was activists themselves who had played a central role in effecting this change. And this brings us full circle to the questions raised at the beginning of this paper. What changed in citizen activism during this period, and why?

The question of what changed is obvious. On a discursive level, the language used by activists underwent significant transformation. "Protest," "demonstration," "opposition," "movement" and other such terms faded into the background, replaced now with ideas such as symbiosis (*kyōsei*), participation (*sanka*), activism (*katsudō*), and of course, proposal (*teian*). Coupled with this discursive shift, citizen movement strategy also underwent significant change. What we might call the "pragmatism of ends" came to dominate the social movement sector. Citizen activists began to tap into and engage with existing legal, economic and political institutions instead of blindly opposing them. When possible, they pursued strategies to promote financial independence and professionalization. Activists tended to avoid broad systemic questions, focusing instead on discrete issues. So, on the surface, at least, the movements of the late 1980s looked and felt a lot different to their predecessors in the 1960s and early 70s. The ways movements articulated their message and the strategies they adopted spoke to a remarkably new praxis in the social movement sector.

The question of why citizens' movements changed in the ways they did is more complex. At the broadest institutional level, there is no doubt that the conservative political and legal environment of post Red Purge Japan played a significant role in guiding activists away from the confrontational model of social activism; we might view the 1960s as a steep learning curve in this respect. The experience of the late 1960s not only shaped the realm of the possible but, more importantly, the realm of the imaginable, and hence we must account for the impact of such institutions in shaping the playing field for the new movements. On a more nuts and bolts level, the shift in activism also clearly benefited from the fruits of growing affluence during the 1960s and 70s. Affluence affected macrosocial value change, and this produced mobilizable constituencies for the movements of the 70s and 80s. But more than this, affluence and the reaction to affluence also produced new opportunities for the activist community in areas as diverse as recycling, aged care, and organic foods. In a sense, the new issues raised by the shift to post-industrialization guided the focus of the social movement sector. So the availability of resources—constituencies, finances etc.—also helped to stimulate the shift from protest to proposal. Here the Japanese experience mirrored a similar process in the industrialized nations of the West, where social

[47] "Seikatsu teian-gata shimin undō no atarashii nami." In *Asahi Journal* (1 August 1986), p. 21.

[48] Interview with Shibata Keizō, 27 June 2002.

activism shifted from protest to more mainstream strategies.[49]

However, as I have argued throughout this paper, the transformation in citizen activism during the 70s and 80s was not merely an epiphenomenon; nor can it be explained entirely in structural terms. As the case of Daichi reveals, activists made key decisions within the bounds of institutional limits and available resources—decisions which contributed to the overall shift in the social movement sector. Indeed, if we look closely at the philosophy behind many of these decisions—for example, the desire for movement autonomy, political neutrality, financial independence, or direct democracy—we discover that the citizen activists of the 70s, 80s and beyond, may not have been so different to their forebears in the "protest" generation. Unlike the analysis of academics, activists did not take a "glass half empty" approach to activism. In other words, they did not discard the earlier principles of citizen activism and recommence with the question: "How do we survive given the terribly constraining environment?" Their "glass half full" approach began with the question: "How do we organize ourselves and accomplish our goals in the way we want to, given the reality out there?" Working from this perspective, activists then sought out ways to preserve their principles on the basis of new strategies and new discourses. The case of Daichi is instructive here: leaders did not choose the stock company form by default. They chose it because the single share idea fit with their philosophy of an internally democratic and responsible movement. The ideas of activists were thus crucial factors in the shift from protest to proposal. But we should also recognize the fact that, in many cases, the impulses informing these ideas resonated closely with earlier grassroots ideology and activism in Japan. Activists certainly moved beyond protest, but they shared many principles with the diehard protestors of old.

So what then of the wider impact of the proposal generation? There are at least four outcomes we can tentatively label positive, and one, tentatively negative. First, through a combination of business entrepreneurship and idealism firmly rooted in daily life, proposal-style citizens' movements helped reframe citizen activism as a professional undertaking. In stark contrast to the movements of the 1960s, activists challenged the entrenched beliefs that indigence was proof of sincerity; that legitimate social movements should be funded by donations; and that profitability was somehow corrupting. The extreme version of such logic was that only profitable or financially self-sustaining movements are socially significant. For most activists, however, the primary implication was that social movements could legitimately and ethically pursue profits or professionalism, if this could support their agenda. From this perspective, proposal movements represent a historical "missing link" between the protest-based residents' and citizens' movements of the late 60s and early 70s and the NPO generation from the 1990s.

Second, by adapting to the realities of legal, political, and economic institutions, proposal-style citizens' movements forged a less confrontational relationship with traditional enemies, particularly

[49] For more on the institutional (political opportunity structure) and resource mobilization approaches to social movements see, respectively: Doug McAdam et al. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne and Spain: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy. *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1987).

local and national bureaucrats, conservative politicians, and the business community. The pessimistic interpretation of this shift is that citizens' movements were co-opted and defanged. To an extent this is true, but we must also recognize the movement- and society-level benefits gained through symbiosis. The strategy of cooperation and participation opened doors in many prefectural administrations and national bureaucracies, and though this clearly suited the bureaucratic preference to "privatize conflict," it also arguably gave activists greater input into the policy-making process from the bottom up, introducing bureaucrats to new and innovative approaches to social problems, and forging mutually rewarding lines of communication.[50] And importantly, by removing the red stain from grassroots activism, symbiosis empowered activists to pursue their agendas with a minimum of official interference. In short, though limiting the range of choices, symbiosis made activism by small groups more effective than ever before. Further, over time, the combined effect of such activism arguably impacted on the attitudes of those in power with respect to citizen activism itself. Though anecdotal, the case of the Dandelion House movement for the disabled is instructive. As Harima Yasuo recalls, "in the 1970s bureaucrats treated us as though we were a front for the JCP or JSP." By the 1990s however, these same bureaucrats were bringing foreign dignitaries to Harima's organization, which they now described as a model of grassroots mobilization for the disabled in regional Japan.[51] The same might be said of the attitude of big business to the third sector in Japan.

Third, the proposal generation nurtured future politicians who would translate their 1970s and 80s activist experiences into progressive politics during the 1990s, most notably through their active participation in the drafting of NPO legislation after the Kobe earthquake in 1995. In fact, though the real drive for an NPO law began in earnest after the Kobe disaster, such activists were discussing the issue as early as the 1980s.[52] This new generation of *shimin-ha* (citizen-side) politicians injected a pragmatic idealism into policymaking that drew directly on their social movement experience during the 70s and 80s and, crucially, it was they who began the reconstruction of progressive politics in the wake of 1989 and the death of the socialist dream. These were the leaders who would translate the proposal experience into the public discourse on the third sector and civil society during the 1990s.[53]

Fourth, proposal movements helped attract new talent into civil society organizations by promising material compensation in return for activism. Through proactive pursuit of financial independence, Fujita, Takami, Harima, and others transformed the nature of participation in citizens' movements

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[50] For a fascinating case study on how minority groups maintain a degree of independence while simultaneously maintaining symbiosis with conservative bureaucratic institutions in Japan see Karen Nakamura. "Resistance and Co-optation: The Japanese Federation of the Deaf and its Relations with State Power." In *Social Science Japan Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2002), pp. 17–35. On the issue of privatization of conflict see Susan J. Pharr. *Losing Face: Status Politics in Japan* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), particularly pp. 207–211.

[51] Harima interview, 23 April 2003.

[52] Various groups formed to discuss the legal and organizational aspects of networking from the mid 1980s. For example the Networking Study Group and the Networkers Conference both spent time looking at NPO legislation in other countries (Harima Yasuo interview, 23 April 2003).

[53] For example, Takami Yūichi and Tsujimoto Kiyomi both entered national politics after their activist experience.

by making it both possible and legitimate to "make a living" from social activism. Highly educated young people who might otherwise have chosen a traditional career path were now presented with valid alternatives in Japan's growing third sector, and some began to take the plunge. By the late 1990s the idea of a career in an NPO or NGO, while by no means mainstream, possessed a legitimacy unheard of during the 1960s and 1970s. The professionalized SMO models produced by proposal activists deserve some credit for this shift in attitudes.

But the legacy of the proposal generation is by no means the stuff of fairytales. After all, such activism was built on the premise of symbiosis—and symbiosis usually involves compromise. In this case, at least one of the prices paid was in the realm of ideology and public discourse, which brings us back to Alberto Melucci, who reminds us that, on a societal and even global level, social movements are far more than organizations for the attainment of specific ends. Indeed, a critical function of social movements is to challenge "the apparatuses that govern the production of information," and to prevent "the channels of representation and decision making in pluralist societies from adopting instrumental rationality as the only logic with which to govern complexity." In short, social movements must also address the "criterion of efficiency and effectiveness" as the "only measure of sense."[54] From this perspective, the proposal generation's open-armed approach to conservative rule and capitalism brings to mind the roughly-translated Japanese saying of "going for wool and coming home shorn."[55] In other words, could social movements really use the tools of the system to change the system? Or did use of these tools, by default, reduce the realm of the utterable—and in turn the doable—to a state of insignificance? In their effort to transform the losing strategy of protest, activists often failed to realize how, in the realm of public discourse, losing movements often have the loudest voice and most enduring legacy, and winning movements do not necessarily result in victory for society as a whole.

Despite the overwhelming shift in the public discourse of activists from the mid 1970s, earlier accusation- and protest-style movements continued to exist in an attenuated form, and even some of these now adopted the language of proposal and symbiosis.[56] Movements such as Daichi clearly defined a powerful, new, and overtly pragmatic model of social activism, strikingly different from the dominant movements during the 1960s. The question, of course, was whether the bet on pragmatism would truly pay off. To be sure, the anarchism inherent in 1960s movements, while certainly not effecting any change in the structure of conservative rule, at the very least, sustained an alternative discourse in a period when economic growthism ruled supreme. In a sense, protest movements kept the discursive universe open. Conversely, movement discourse during the 1970s and 80s cast a shadow over this earlier "reactionary" history, shifting attention from the problem *of* the system to problems *within* the system. What this discursive and strategic shift will mean for Japan's "civil society" remains an open bet.

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[54] Alberto Melucci. "A Strange Kind of Newness: What's 'New' in New Social Movements?," p. 102.

[55] Literally translated, the Japanese saying is "going for a mummy but coming home mummified."

[56] One need only look at the language of the current-day Japanese peace movement to see how discourse has shifted. Antiwar demonstrations are now sometimes called "Peace Festivals."